



# OPEN DOORS

*An information bulletin produced by the  
US EPA Region 8 Environmental Justice  
Program*

September 1999

## COOPERATIVE ACTION YIELDS RESULTS IN NORTH DENVER COMMUNITIES

The houses on Clayton Street in Denver are small and neat, the yards well-kept and the sidewalks in good repair. This is a street where the residents clearly take great pride in their neighborhood. These houses, together with about four thousand others, have something more in common than the pride residents take in their properties - each house sits within a Superfund study area.

As a result of an investigation of soils in neighborhood yards performed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, it was determined that some yards contained unusually high levels of lead and arsenic. That finding led to the proposal of Superfund status for the area in February. In July the area was added to the National Priorities List and granted formal Superfund site status. This means that the cleanup of affected neighborhood yards would be paid for by the federal Superfund program.

To undertake an investigation and cleanup of this magnitude requires an enormous commitment of resources as well as the trust and cooperation of the residents of the area. The resources are now covered by the Superfund site designation. The trust and cooperation of the residents is something to be earned. EPA is working with the residents as an integral part of the investigation and cleanup decisions which must be made. A Working Group, consisting of residents, government agency personnel and other stakeholders, meets in the neighborhood monthly to work through the hundreds of issues which surround the cleanup of the affected yards. Neighborhood residents are learning about sampling plans, risk assessment, cleanup levels and just how much time it takes to come to good decisions about each of these issues.

With a combined effort, the residents of North Denver, the EPA, ATSDR, the state of Colorado and the City of Denver will leave a neighborhood more environmentally sound, with lowered risk to residents and an even stronger sense of residential pride.

## SOCIOLOGY MEETS THE ENVIRONMENT IN DEVILS LAKE ANALYSIS

Region 8's environmental justice staff is currently assessing perceived social impacts of the emergency outlet proposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to control flooding in Devils Lake, North Dakota. (Details of the proposed project can be found in the Draft Scoping Document, Devils Lake Emergency Outlet Environmental Impact Statement, dated June 1998.) The study examines the perceived impacts of the proposed outlet on various communities surrounding Devils Lake, taking into consideration feedback from farmers, ranchers, tribal members, residents of low-income communities, and others.

A central goal of this study is to determine whether low-income communities or minority communities would shoulder a disproportionate burden or benefit (economically, environmentally, or culturally) as a result of the proposed outlet project. For this reason, emphasis was placed on examining the responses of communities in various regions of Devils Lake to compare and contrast the perceived impacts of the proposed project and other water management options.

Telephone interviews were held with residents from all areas of the Devils Lake region. Study participants were encouraged to share their views on the potential impacts of the proposed emergency outlet, and on other water management options in the area. Among the responses mentioned were concerns about impacts of upper basin wetlands drainage on the flooding at Devils Lake, questions about the actual effectiveness of the proposed outlet, and impacts of the outlet on downstream communities.



Potential impacts of the proposed outlet to minority or low-income communities are currently being assessed, and preliminary findings have been shared with the USACE. A final version of the report should be available within the next few months.

*If you have questions or would like additional information on this study, please contact Jan Buhrmann, an Intern in the EJ program at 1-800-227-8917, ext. 6775.*

## EJ BROWNBAG SERIES

You're invited to attend a series of brownhags on topics related to environmental justice hosted by EPA Region 8.

**EPA EJ PANEL** September 8  
Jim Berkley, Bonnie Lavelle, Gene Reetz  
Incorporating EJ Considerations into EPA's Multi-Media Programs (NEPA, and Superfund)

**DAVID PELLO, Ph.D** October 20  
Assistant Professor, Departments of Ethnic Studies and Sociology, University of CO, Boulder  
Low-Wage Labor Force Issues and EJ

Stay tuned for a flyer describing these sessions and others in more detail. **All sessions will be held from 11:30 - 1:00, in EPA's Conference Center, located at 999 18<sup>th</sup> Street, downtown Denver.** The Conference Center is on the second floor of the building. Please check in at the reception desk in the conference center. Don't forget to allow for extra time to park, and bring your lunch!

## BROWNFIELDS '99 CONFERENCE TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIPS

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is pleased to sponsor a limited number of full and partial scholarships for participants who are interested in attending the Brownfields '99 conference in Dallas, Texas on December 6-8, but otherwise will not be able to attend without financial assistance for travel.

To be eligible for a scholarship, applicants must be affiliated with or a representative of a local government, state government, community organization, environmental justice organization, or not-for-profit entity.

For more information on the Brownfields '99 conference and how to apply for a scholarship, visit: <http://www.icma.org/Brownfields99/Scholarships.cfm>, ICMA's web site, or <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>, EPA's brownfields web site. ICMA must receive all scholarship applications by September 15, 1999.

## ON LINE WITH EJ

EPA Region 8 homepage [www.epa.gov/region08/](http://www.epa.gov/region08/)  
EPA Region 8 Technical Library [www.epa.gov/region08/lib/ejlib.html](http://www.epa.gov/region08/lib/ejlib.html)  
EPA Headquarters EJ Homepage [www.epa.gov/swerosps/ej/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/ej/index.html)  
OECA OEJ Homepage? <http://es.epa.gov/oeca/oej/>  
NEJAC Homepage <http://es.epa.gov/oeca/oej/nejac/>  
EPA Brownfields Homepage <http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/index.html>  
EDF's Chemical Scorecard [www.scorecard.org](http://www.scorecard.org)  
Environmental Justice Database <http://www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/modej/masterej.html>

### HOTLINE NUMBERS

Region 8 Environmental Justice Program	1-800-227-8917, ext 7076	8:00-4:00 MST
Region 8 Environmental Information Service Center (EISC)	1-800-227-8917	8:45-4:00 MST
Office of Environmental Justice, Washington D.C.	1-800-962-6215	8:00-5:30 EST
Asbestos & Lead	1-800-462-6706	8:00-5:00 EST
Hazardous Waste Ombudsman	1-800-262-7937	8:30-4:30 EST
Indoor Air Quality Information	1-800-438-4318	9:00-5:00 EST
National Response Center - Oil & Hazardous Material Spills	1-800-424-8802	24 hours/365 days
Resource Conservation & Recovery Act/, Superfund, & EPCR	1-800-424-9348	9:00-6:00 EST
Safe Drinking Water:	1-800-426-4791	9:00-5:30 EST





### NEW RISK-SCREENING TOOL AVAILABLE

EPA has made available a new CD-ROM tool entitled Risk-Screening Environmental Indicators, which uses national data on toxic chemical emissions from EPA's Toxic Release Inventory. This tool can compare data on amount of pollution released, geographical area, industrial facility, including information on relative toxicity, to develop relative risks for chronic human health.

Specifically, the new tool can be used to compare relative risk from toxic chemicals grouped by categories like cities, states and industrial facilities, etc., based on factors like pounds of pollutants released, relative toxicity, population and exposure data. These rankings can only be used for comparisons and not for quantifying actual risks posed to public health from any single facility, geographical area or other category.

A more detailed description of the tool, how to obtain a copy of the CD-ROM, the user manual, frequently asked questions, and contact information is available at: [http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/env\\_ind/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/env_ind/index.html).

### EJ GRANT WRITING WORKSHOPS

Marcella DeVargas and Nancy Reish will be conducting two grant writing workshops this September providing information for EJ Small Grants, EJ Pollution Prevention Grants, and State/Tribal EJ Grants.

Topics covered in this workshop include: overview of the EJ Program, focus of the three grant programs listed above, understanding the grant application process, determining types of projects suitable for EJ grants, writing an effective proposal, how to complete an application package, and understanding the

approval process.

Groups and organizations encouraged to attend: non-profit organizations 501(c)3, minority community groups, tribal and indigenous groups, community and grassroots organizations, community development organizations, state and local governments, religious organizations, and academic institutions.

The workshops are free of charge and no preregistration is required. The first workshop will be held in Helena, Montana on September 21, 1:00-4:00pm, at the Forest Service Building, 2880 Skyway Drive. The second workshop will be held in White River, South Dakota on September 28, 1:00-4:00pm, at the Sacred Heart Catholic Hall, Main Street.

If you have any questions, please call Nancy Reish at (800) 227-8917 ext. 6040.

### THE INTERN INSIDER

### STAFFING CHANGES

In August 1999, Elisabeth Evans, Director of the EJ program at Region VIII was promoted to Director of Planning and Targeting in Region VIII's Enforcement Division. We send out congratulations to Liz and well wishes in her new position.

Congratulations are also due to Deldi Reyes, who will be taking on the responsibilities of Acting EJ Director through December 1999.





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Attn: ENF-EJ

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**EPA's EJ STAFF**

(303) 312,

plus extension below

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EMAIL can be sent using the following format:  
lastname.firstname@epa.gov  
[www.epa.gov/region08](http://www.epa.gov/region08)